NC Teach Alternative Licensure Program

Program Handbook for Initial Licensure

Created December 2025

Designed for Alternative Licensed Teachers, Mentors/Cooperating Teachers, School Administrators, and University Supervisors 2026–2027

Preface

This handbook provides guidance, expectations, and requirements for candidates enrolled in the NC Teach Alternative Licensure Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). NC Teach is a practice-based, employment-centered pathway designed for individuals who are teachers of record while completing licensure requirements.

The NC Teach program is grounded in strong partnerships between UNCG, North Carolina public school districts, and community stakeholders. These partnerships are intended to support alternative licensed teachers through intensive coaching, coursework, mentoring, and supervision to ensure positive learning outcomes for P–12 students and long-term teacher success.

The mission of professional education at UNCG is to ensure Access to Opportunities through Teaching, Learning, and Caring. This mission is realized through alignment with state and national standards; explicit connections between research, theory, and practice; ongoing assessment of candidate growth; collaboration among stakeholders; and a deep commitment to equity, belonging, and educational excellence.

This handbook is organized to outline: - Communication procedures - Responsibilities of NC Teach candidates (alternative licensed teachers) - Roles of mentors/cooperating teachers and school administrators - Responsibilities of UNCG supervisors - Evaluation, licensure, and professional expectations

All candidates, mentors, and supervisors are expected to review this handbook carefully. The Teacher Education Handbook and program-specific guidance from NC Teach faculty serve as companion documents.

SECTION A: COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Successful alternative licensure pathways rely on clear, proactive, and professional communication among all stakeholders, including NC Teach candidates, mentors/cooperating teachers, school administrators, UNCG supervisor- Dr. Faith Freeman, and program faculty.

General Communication Expectations

- Communication should be timely, respectful, and solution-oriented.
- Concerns or questions should be addressed at the appropriate level to ensure efficient resolution.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times regarding students, families, and school personnel.

Communication Flow for NC Teach Candidates

- School-based concerns (e.g., mentoring, instructional support, scheduling) should first be discussed with the mentor/cooperating teacher.
- Program-related concerns (e.g., coursework, licensure requirements, evaluations) should first be directed to the UNCG supervisor or NC Teach faculty.
- Escalation: If concerns are not resolved, candidates should consult their UNCG supervisor, who will advise on next steps.

The following suggestions are recommended to enhance communication for all involved.

- Dr. Faith Freeman, together with the building principal and/or Curriculum Facilitator, or other liaison designee, should meet as needed (in-person or virtually) with CTs to ensure communication regarding intern placement, performance, supervision, evaluation, and any other issues that may arise. Dr. Freeman should arrange to meet with CTs at the beginning of each semester and more often if necessary.
- Dr. Faith Freeman, Director of Alternative Licensure Pathways & the Spartan Education Scholars Program, Regional Director of NTSP, can be contacted at fabrown@uncg.edu.
- The respective chair of the candidate's department.
- Dr. Kerri Richardson, Chair of the UNCG Department of Teacher Education and Higher Education, may be reached via e-mail at *KDRICHA2@uncg.edu.*

Professional conversations must remain confidential and should not occur in public or informal settings. Candidates are expected to demonstrate professional dispositions at all times.

SECTION B: NC TEACH CANDIDATES (ALTERNATIVE LICENSED TEACHERS)

Status as Teacher of Record

NC Teach candidates are employed as teachers of record under a residency or emergency license while completing licensure requirements. Candidates are expected to meet all district policies and professional responsibilities associated with full-time teaching.

Attendance and Professional Responsibility

- Candidates are expected to meet all school-based contractual obligations.
- Attendance at required NC Teach seminars, coursework, coaching sessions, and observations is mandatory.
- Absences from program requirements must be communicated in advance to the UNCG supervisor when possible.

Failure to meet attendance expectations may impact evaluations, program standing, course grades, and licensure recommendations.

Professional Components for Online Courses

In addition to meeting academic grading requirements, graduate students enrolled in online courses are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors consistent with expectations for licensed educators and graduate-level study. Professional components are an integral part of course evaluation and may influence assignment grades and overall course performance. These components include active and timely participation in online discussions and activities; regular attendance and engagement in synchronous sessions when required; professional communication that is respectful, clear, and responsive; and adherence to deadlines for assignments and collaborative work. Students are expected to submit high-quality, polished work that reflects careful attention to instructions, academic integrity, and professional standards. Failure to meet professional expectations—such as persistent late submissions, lack of engagement, unprofessional communication, or failure to respond to faculty outreach—may result in grade penalties and/or additional program interventions, regardless of content mastery.

Observations and Coaching

NC Teach candidates will participate in:

- Informal coaching observations

- Formal evaluative observations by mentors and UNCG supervisors

 - Pre- and post-observation conferences

Candidates are responsible for:

- Scheduling observations in advance

- Submitting lesson plans and required forms

- Engaging in reflective conversations following observations

Observation tools and forms are included in Appendix B.

SECTION C: COURSEWORK, PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION

Coursework Structure

NC Teach coursework is designed to integrate theory and practice, supporting candidates as they teach full-time. Coursework emphasizes:

- Instructional planning and delivery

 - Classroom management

- Assessment and data-informed instruction

 - Equity, culturally responsive teaching, and belonging

Specific course sequences and timelines are provided by NC Teach advisor- Dr. Faith Freeman.

Program Standards

UNCG is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the State of North Carolina. Candidates must demonstrate proficiency on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (NCPTS).

Evaluation and Assessment

Candidates are evaluated using:

- Teaching Competency Evaluations (TCE)

 - Professional Dispositions Assessments

 - School-based evaluations

- edTPA

Evaluations are stored in the SONIA Assessment System. Candidates must demonstrate satisfactory progress in all areas to remain in good standing.

Professional Improvement Plan (PIP)

Candidates who receive unsatisfactory ratings may be placed on a Professional Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP outlines:

- Areas of concern

- Action steps and supports

 - Timeline for reassessment

Failure to demonstrate improvement may result in dismissal from the program.

SECTION D: COOPERATING TEACHERS / MENTORS & SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Role of Mentors / Cooperating Teachers

Mentors play a critical role in the success of NC Teach candidates by:

 - Providing instructional coaching and feedback

 – Supporting classroom management and planning

- Engaging in observation and reflective conversations

 - Completing required evaluations

Mentors should maintain professional boundaries while serving as both coach and evaluator.

School Administrator Responsibilities

Administrators support NC Teach candidates by:

- Providing appropriate teaching assignments

 - Supporting mentoring structures

- Communicating concerns promptly to UNCG supervisors

- Ensuring candidates meet district expectations

SECTION E: UNCG SUPERVISORS

Responsibilities of UNCG Supervisors

UNCG supervisors serve as liaisons between UNCG and partner schools. Responsibilities include:

 - Conducting observations and evaluations

 - Facilitating coaching and reflection

 - Monitoring candidate progress

- Ensuring compliance with accreditation and licensure standards

Supervisors coordinate evaluations, support mentors, and provide guidance throughout the program.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING

Because NC Teach candidates are already teachers of record, substitute teaching policies are governed by district guidelines. Candidates must ensure substitute roles do not conflict with program responsibilities and must receive supervisor approval when applicable.

GRADUATION & LICENSURE

Licensure Requirements

Candidates must:

- Complete all NC Teach coursework - Submit edTPA for official scoring - Complete required licensure exams (Pearson/Praxis)

Passing scores are required by the State of North Carolina within the designated timeframe for a clear license.

edTPA

The edTPA portfolio assesses Planning, Instruction, and Assessment and is a required component for licensure recommendation.

Please see detailed requirements below:

Graduation:

Students complete 18-24 hours of coursework depending on program requirements (please see below). Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA and earn a minimum of a B grade for all courses.

Licensure:

Licensure Exams:

Candidates for licensure at UNCG are expected to complete all program requirements and courses. While candidates may graduate without passing edTPA or Praxis, specific expectations apply at each stage of the process.

- **For graduation:** Candidates must complete all program and course requirements.
- **For licensure recommendation:** To be recommended for licensure by UNCG, candidates must make at least one official attempt at all required licensure assessments, including edTPA and Praxis. Assessment scores do not impact the licensure recommendation.
- **For full state licensure:** The state requires candidates to successfully pass all required licensure exams by the end of their third year of teaching.

The Teaching Resource Center (TRC), located on the 3rd floor of the SOEB, offers study materials and resources for edTPA and Praxis that candidates may check out.

<u>edTPA Portfolio</u>

The edTPA Portfolio is completed during the semester of the program.

To demonstrate mastery of the NC Professional Teaching Standards and the NCDPI standards (for teaching content), the Department of Teacher Education requires teachers to complete and submit the edTPA portfolio for licensure. UNCG School of Education requires teachers to complete and submit the edTPA portfolio for licensure. The edTPA portfolio encompasses 3 main tasks: Planning, Instruction, & Assessment. More information will follow.

In addition to the above requirements, you will need to meet the university graduation requirements. Please refer to your UNCG Student Handbook and the Teacher Education Handbook for Graduate Students (Teacher Education Handbook). It is your responsibility to know and understand the requirements for graduation. Your advisor will provide you with clear and accurate information regarding UNCG/School of Education/state policies, procedures, and services.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

UNCG Policies and Requirements, such as the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy, etc. https://sa.uncg.edu/division-of-student-affairs/students/academic-resources/student-policy-handbook/academic-integrity-policy/

Be careful not to plagiarize, using someone else's words as your own. Note that slightly modifying the original words (changing a word here or there, leaving out a clause from a sentence, etc.) still constitutes plagiarism. Sometimes this happens by chance if you take extensive notes on some text, and then simply use those words in your own paper—but it is still plagiarism. If you use an author's words, you must put them in quotation marks and cite your source (author's name, date, and page number), and if you summarize, you must also cite your source (author's name and date only). To save potential problems, please take this workshop: https://libapps4.uncg.edu/tutorials/module.aspx?t=75&m=65

Plagiarism is a serious issue. The minimum penalty for a first offence is F on the assignment, and a report filed with the appropriate office on campus.

Graduate Grading Requirements and Academic Good Standing

UNCG's Graduate School uses a formal grading system for all graduate-level courses, where permanent letter grades (e.g., A, A-, B+, B, etc.) are assigned and factored into a graduate student's cumulative GPA. Graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all graduate coursework and make at least a B to remain in Academic Good Standing and to be eligible for degree completion and continuation in their program. Courses may also be

graded on an S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) basis, which does not count in the GPA; however, satisfactory performance is still required for program progress. Temporary grades such as NR (Not Reported) and I (Incomplete) must be resolved according to Graduate School policy, and all grading regulations—including definitions of permanent grades, GPA calculation, and handling of temporary or special grades—are outlined in the UNCG Graduate Policies section of the academic catalog.

See link below for specific details: https://catalog.uncg.edu/academic-regulations-policies/graduate-policies/#sectioniacademicrequirementsandregulationstext (University Catalog)

Professional Communication, Timeliness, and Work Quality Expectations

NC Teach candidates are expected to demonstrate:

 - Responsiveness within 24 business hours

 - Reliability and deadline adherence

 - High-quality, professional work

- Proactive communication and problem-solving

These expectations reflect readiness for continued professional practice and licensure.

Specific Program Requirements

NC Teach Elementary Education — Plan of Study

(24-Hour Program)

Core Courses: [6 credit hours]

- **TED 636 (3)** Educational Psychology and Differentiated Instruction
  or
  TED 669 (3) Educational Implications of Learning and Development
- **TED 545 (3)** Diverse Learners

Pedagogical Expertise Courses: [18 credit hours]

- **TED 641 or 642 (3)** Reading Instruction
- **TED 518 (3)** Mathematics in the Elementary School I
- **TED 519 (3)** Science in the Elementary School
- **TED 520 (3)** Social Studies in the Elementary School
- Additional elementary pedagogy as required by program plan

Professional Development / Clinical Experience: [6–9 credit hours]

- **TED 681 & 682 (6)** Clinical Experience in Teaching

NC Teach Middle Grades Education — Plan of Study

(18-Hour Program)

Core Courses: [9 credit hours]

- **TED 636 (3)** Educational Psychology and Differentiated Instruction
  or
  TED 669 (3) Educational Implications of Learning and Development
- **TED 545 (3)** Diverse Learners
- **TED 535 (3)** Literacy in the Content Area

Pedagogical Expertise Courses: [3 credit hours]

- Content-specific pedagogy courses aligned with the candidate's two middle grades concentration areas (e.g., ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies)

Professional Development / Clinical Experience: [6 credit hours]

- **TED 681 & 682 (6)** Clinical Experience in Teaching

NC Teach Secondary Education — Plan of Study

(18-Hour Program)

Core Courses: [9 credit hours]

- **TED 636 (3)** Educational Psychology and Differentiated Instruction
  or
  TED 669 (3) Educational Implications of Learning and Development
- **TED 545 (3)** Diverse Learners
- **TED 535 (3)** Literacy in the Content Area

Pedagogical Expertise Courses: [3 credit hours]

- Content-specific pedagogy courses aligned with the candidate's licensure area (e.g., Math, Science, English, Social Studies)

Professional Development / Clinical Experience: [6 credit hours]

- **TED 681 & 682 (6)** Clinical Experience in Teaching

NC Teach ESL / Multilingual Learners — Plan of Study

(18-Hour Program)

Core Courses: [9 credit hours]

- **TED 636 (3)** Educational Psychology and Differentiated Instruction
  or
  TED 669 (3) Educational Implications of Learning and Development
- **TED 523 (3)** Legal, Historical, and Cultural Issues in ESL
- **TED 604 (3)** Applied Linguistics for Teachers

Pedagogical Expertise Courses: [3 credit hours]

- **TED 618 (3)** Teaching English as a Second Language

Professional Development / Clinical Experience: [6 credit hours]

- **TED 681 & 682 (6)** Clinical Experience in Teaching

APPENDICES

Appendix A: TED Mission – Teaching Toward Change

(See official TED mission statement)

Appendix B: Observation Forms

- Pre-Observation Form
- Informal Observation Form (Praise/Question/Polish)
- Formal Observation Feedback Form

Appendix C: Professional Improvement Plan (PIP)

(Required form and procedures)

APPENDIX A

TED Mission: Teaching toward Change

The Department of Teacher Education and Higher Education provides the academic and practical preparation for educational leaders from the elementary grades to higher education in the dynamic and diverse contexts of educational institutions. The ultimate purpose of education is to ensure students' intellectual, cultural, and social growth so that they may become active, reflective citizens. To achieve this goal, our graduates draw from knowledge of educational theory, policy, research, and practice to engage students in the active construction of knowledge, enact culturally responsive principles, adapt to the specific needs of their students, and assess and respond to students' performances. To prepare teachers, teacher educators, and leaders in higher education to meet these goals, we hold the following five principles to be essential:

- *Leadership*: Our graduates will acquire the skills and dispositions to lead the field with respect to scholarship, administration, pedagogy, and professional development to contribute to educational reforms aimed at equity of access and equity of outcome.
- *Scholarship*: To lead and teach effectively, educators need to engage in the knowledge building of their disciplines, institutions, or educational contexts. Through such activities, educators enhance understanding of professional practice; continue to develop and improve their practice; contribute to the ongoing reform of educational efforts; and link their individual professional lives to local, state, and national educational contexts. In TED, participation in scholarly enterprises begins with students' initial licensure and continues through advanced studies.
- *Understanding Schools and Colleges as Institutions*: All educational institutions operate from a set of specific political, cultural, and pedagogical assumptions. The ability to "read" institutions for these commitments and to participate as active agents in their maintenance and renewal is an essential element of leadership. Our graduates will acquire historical, political, and cultural knowledge to be such active agents.
- *Building Community Understanding*: Education takes place not only in institutions but also in communities that have their own histories and hopes. TED programs engage students in the exploration of community life and its relationship to educational institutions so that their graduates will recognize the importance of community involvement to their professional and civic lives.
- *Thoughtfully Adaptive Practice: Effective educators can reflect on their practices* and respond to these reflections with flexible, purposeful decision-making. They examine their practices and alter them to ensure the intellectual, social, and emotional growth of their students. To be thoughtfully adaptive, educators need to be knowledgeable about their students, their discipline, and effective pedagogy, as well as the ways local, state, and national initiatives influence their practice. TED programs provide its students with extensive understanding of effective curricular and institutional models, their uses in various educational settings, and the ways they may be adapted for diverse students.

APPENDIX B

Observation Forms

- *Pre-Observation Form*
- *Informal Observation Form (Praise/Polish)*
- *Formal Observation Form*

PRE-OBSERVATION FORM

(Please use this form before EVERY lesson that will be observed by your peer, CT, or supervisor)

NAME:

1. What is the topic of your lesson?

2. Why are you teaching this lesson? What is your rationale for teaching it?

3. Why did you design your instruction in this lesson as you did? Why did you choose this way of teaching your lesson (e.g., was the idea from a methods course? From your CT? From another source?)

4.   As you are thinking through this lesson, what do you believe will be the most challenging part of this lesson for you when you teach it? Why?

5. How will you know if your lesson is successful in meeting the needs of all your students and in meeting your goals?

INFORMAL OBSERVATION FORM
PRAISE/QUESTION/POLISH

(To be used during all peer, CT, and university teacher educator informal observations)

Name of person being observed:

Name of observer:

Date:

Please remember to use the pre-observation form to guide your observation.

PRAISE (What went well in this lesson? Be specific.)

QUESTION (List 1-3 questions you have about specific teaching behaviors, interactions, or instructional techniques that you observed.)

 POLISH (Based on the above questions and, if possible, your post-observation conference with the person you observed, list 1-3 areas that you suggest the person you observe target for improvement.)

REACTION (to be completed by the person who was observed): Do you agree with your observer's suggestions? Why or why not? If you agree with the suggestions, describe briefly how you will work to improve these areas and how you will know whether you improved in these areas.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

TEACHER EDUCATION FIELD EXPERIENCES

Formal Classroom Observation Feedback Form

Preservice Teacher: Date:

School: Time:

Observer: Grade:

To be completed by the Preservice Teacher prior to the observation

1. What are your goals and objectives for this lesson?

2. What are some specific things you would like observed?

To be completed by the Observer during or after the observation

3. Strengths to continue to build on:

4. Suggestions for future lessons:

APPENDIX C

- Professional Improvement Plan (PIP)

Professional Improvement Plan (PIP)

Name of Candidate   _____

Name of Evaluator   _____
Date of Plan   _____

Attach the most recent dispositions assessment (as applicable) and other relevant documentation.

Area(s) of Concern Name item(s) of concern from the Dispositions and/or TCE	Description of Area(s) of Concern	Plans for Remediation	Person(s) Responsible	Timetable Include dates/timeline for Reassessments

NOTE: If a candidate's dispositions do not improve after the Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) has been developed and appropriate time and opportunities for improvement have been provided, the candidate may be dismissed from the program. Further, the PIP will be revisited and reevaluated throughout all of the candidate's internship and student teaching semesters.

Signature of Candidate_____ Date
_____

Signature of Evaluator _____ Date
_____

Professional Communication
- One of the most critical expectations is around communication. You are expected to respond to emails and messages from faculty within 24 hours during business days. Even if you do not have a complete answer yet, a simple acknowledgment that you received the message and are working on a response is sufficient.
- Proactive communication is a sign of professionalism. If you are confused about an assignment, timeline, or expectation — it is your responsibility to reach out and seek clarification.
- Silence is not acceptable. We would much rather you ask clarifying questions than move forward without understanding the full scope of a task.

Timeliness and Reliability

- Timeliness and dependability are non-negotiable. When you are given a task or project, it is expected that you meet the agreed-upon deadline.
- Deadlines are in place for a reason — faculty plan their work and broader project timelines around deliverables. If you encounter an unexpected issue that prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must communicate early, not after the deadline has already passed.
- Patterns of missed deadlines, unexplained delays, or inconsistent work will be formally addressed.

Work Quality

- The quality of the work you submit is just as important as completing it.
- We expect thorough, thoughtful, and polished work that reflects careful attention to detail. Rushed or incomplete submissions suggest a lack of investment and are not acceptable. Each one of you has a set # of hours per week to spend working on your assistantship. It is expected that this time is invested in completing high quality work.
- Please make sure to proofread all materials, double-check that you have followed all instructions, and take the time to deliver work you are proud of.
- Think of each assignment — no matter how small — as a reflection of your professional readiness.

Responsiveness

- Related to communication, responsiveness is crucial. When faculty members reach out with a request, an update, or feedback, we expect timely engagement from you.
- Even when you are balancing coursework, internship, and personal responsibilities (even unexpected ones), you must find a way to stay responsive.